



Fundraising Good News

We were pleased to hear confirmation of a generous grant towards our Restoration Project of £50,000 from Viridor. This comes with a condition of a donation back to them of £5,000 from us (which cannot come from their award) as a CTP (Contributing Third Party) payment. We are very grateful to the two donors who have generously covered this. More grant applications are in the pipeline and we are crossing fingers and toes. The full cost of the project (including the installation of a toilet with facilities for people with a disability) and altering the front access to remove the deep step down into the Meeting House is £668,696.80. So far we have raised £546,000, which leaves a shortfall of £122,696.80 if we want to meet the whole target. Funders are under pressure because of the Covid-19 effect with reduced interest on their investments and less money to distribute. It is becoming more challenging to find funds, so please help in any way you can.

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I am not a BAME. I am a black woman.

The first time, recently, when I heard this four-letter acronym I was somewhat confused. I was unable to fully concentrate on what was being said – instead I was trying to decipher BAME. What I heard was BABE. Now I know: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic.

Growing up in one of Jamaica's tourist destinations, I had no concept of being black. My family were all black, my friends were black, our neighbours were black, we were all black together. But come the holiday season there were hundreds of English/British, American, Canadian and German who descended on our beautiful beach. We weren't allowed on the beach at those times – instead we could go to the furthest part where it was mostly rocks or alternatively to the river.

I can remember my uncle asking me if I wanted to go to England, I say 'asking' but it wasn't really a question that required an answer from me. I was being sent to live with my father (his wife and adult son) – a person of whom I had only the faintest memory and that may have been from being told, rather than actually my own memory. April 1968. I was met at the airport by my father and a cousin of mine who I knew in Jamaica. From the airport to Camberwell green I said to my father that there are plenty of jobs in England because of all the bellowing smoke coming from the factories. There was a sadness that filled his eyes. I'll never forget it. He replied '*No, my child, those are no factories, they are houses, people live*

I am not a BAME. I am a black woman – cont.

in them and you are going to live in one'.

We were told the streets of London were paved with gold. Somebody lied!

At the local Secondary Modern school over fifty years ago I encountered what, with hindsight must have been a form of racism, when the Geography teacher told me in front of the whole class that I was stupid for trying to describe the changing seasons in Jamaica. According to her, Jamaica has no seasons. And with no support from home where it was often said *'teacher knows best'*, my confidence fell and to this day I don't believe that I achieved as my teacher cousin in Jamaica said I would from being taught in an English school.

After leaving school my first job was at Unitarian Headquarters. I had signed on at the Employment Agency, they would phone prospective employers on my behalf, giving my details and there was no attempt at disguising the fact that there were those who simply did not want a 'coloured' person amongst them. Reasons given: their customers wouldn't like it; there are no other 'coloured' persons at that place; I wouldn't fit in. Those were the polite ones. The then deputy General Secretary at HQ said *'I don't care what colour she is as long as she can do the work'*. That work involved typing, filing, answering the telephone, running errands etc. as an Office Junior. Essex Hall was a relatively safe environment in which to work. Attending Annual General Meetings, well I came up against all sorts. Unitarians are human.

People would say things, tell 'jokes' and I was supposed to laugh – otherwise it was deemed I had a chip on my shoulder or was too sensitive.

'Emancipate yourself from mental slavery'. The name calling, the assumption that I am involved in drug dealing and/or prostitution was commonplace.

I was 'made redundant' after only six months from my first job in the town. I found out much later

from another co-worker that one of the other typists didn't like working alongside a 'coloured' person and was able to persuade the office manager to sack me. Which he did and the reason given was redundancy. I suppose I am fortunate in that I have never been physically assaulted – I know people in Ipswich who have – but I have learned to walk tall when some bonehead (usually in a vehicle) thinks it is necessary or funny to shout *'nigger go back to your country'*, to spit at me or worse.

There are those who cross the street rather than walk past me. Now Covid-19 provides the perfect cover.

I have been to a local parish church, sat in a pew and was promptly approached and told to move because that seat was reserved for someone else. The service ended, but no one came to occupy that seat. Years later I revisited that same church and was greeted at the door with *'what are you doing here?'*

Another example which comes to mind: talking to someone on the telephone and then we meet ... *'Oh you don't look the way you sound over the telephone'* they say.

If you have the rhythm you must feel the blues. In amongst all the hate and abuse and name calling, there are some wonderful people. Those people who will speak up, have spoken up, written letters and speak comforting words, doing the right thing. But I suppose even for those people it can be tiresome to be continually fighting ... fighting ...fighting. The situation in Ipswich has changed a lot since I've been living here, BUT there is still more to do. Each generation will have their own struggles to overcome.

I don't want anyone to feel guilty for being white. Just to be aware of the automatic privileges – privileges that are given and taken but are denied to others who happen to have a different skin tone. Be aware, be thoughtful, be kind and don't make assumptions based on a person's ethnicity, skin or hair colour. There is only one race.

The HUMAN race.

by Paulette Reed

Suffolk Historic Churches Trust

The Suffolk Historic Churches Trust raises a lot of their funds via the annual Ride and Stride sponsored walks and cycles round churches in Suffolk. We were lucky enough to be awarded their maximum grant of £10,000 towards our Restoration Project which was used on our roof to protect the building while we were raising further funds.

This year Tessa Forsdike has taken on the role of organiser for Ipswich for the Ride and Stride event. It will be quite different for all churches because of the Covid-19 restrictions, but we need to make an extra effort because the funds we raise are so important to restore and protect churches in Suffolk for the future.

If you could help by joining Tessa one day/evening to fill envelopes to be delivered to the local churches, she will be very grateful. It could be a good social time – distanced of course. Please contact her on tessa@tessajordan.co.uk or 01473 728498.

Tessa also has the sponsorship forms for those people who will be walking or cycling to raise funds. Our Meeting House has taken part in the scheme regularly for over 5 years and I am sure that played a part in our eligibility for the generous grant. It is important to continue with our support. Because of our building work continuing, we will probably not be able (this year) to open our Meeting House for Ride and Stride visitors on Saturday 12th September, but we can have a gazebo on the forecourt with leaflets and we can sign people's sponsorship forms as another way of supporting the event. If you can help with this, do let Tessa know.

Book Group Meeting

The Book Group will be meeting (via Zoom) on Thursday 6th August at 7pm to discuss '*Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*' by Gail Honeyman, which was suggested by Maggie Hodges. All are welcome to join us – even if you have not finished reading the book.

GOSPELS, GNOSTICS AND THE GROWTH OF THE EARLY CHURCH

Our Minister Emeritus, Rev Cliff Reed, has generously agreed to lead this 5 session course via "Zoom", starting on Tuesday 4th August at 7 p.m.

The course will run as follows:

Session I - 4th August

1. Introduction: From Jewish Sect to Universal Faith.
2. Writing the Gospels: The Birth of Christian Scripture.

Session II – 11th August

3. The Four Canonical Gospels: Mark, Matthew, Luke and John.

Session III – 18th August

4. The Gnostic Dimension.

Session IV – 25th August

5. The Apostolic Fathers and the Developing Christian Mainstream.

Session V – 1st September

6. Gospels of the Passion and the Infancy of Christ.

A few places are still available – if you'd like to take part, please contact Ann Baeppler. Though there will be no charge for the course, you are invited to make a donation to the Meeting House Restoration Fund.

The Art of Czech Animation

Congratulations to Adam Whybray, whose book has been published by Bloomsbury and you can buy it in hardback or as a Kindle ebook online: <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/the-art-of-czech-animation-9781350104655/>

The book examines the ways in which Czech animation from the 1920s to the present day has used allegory to communicate political-ecological ideas to audiences.

Restoration Update

Our wonderful workers from Valiant have been very busy through out July and have made good progress with the restoration work on our Meeting House.

All the wall surfaces have been stripped of old plaster, the red battening has been completed on 3 sides (East; South; West) and the lathing has been done on the east and south sides, ready for plastering. The leadwork on three sides to protect the windows from rain is finished and now the workers are concentrating on the north side. Luckily the timber on the north was not in too poor a condition and those repairs are now finished. The brickwork in the broom cupboard under the stairs has been replaced and a new oak plate is to go in there.

The dedication of the workers and foreman Mark Frankis shows in the fact that they will be working at the weekend on some lead repairs so as not to delay the progress of the project. We thank them sincerely.



RE-OPENING THE BUILDING

The building work will be nearing its completion in the early autumn, though it would probably not be sensible to name an actual date when we might hope to “return home”. At the last Trustees’ meeting we talked about the timing of a grand re-opening event, and on balance thought that this should take place in the Spring to allow sufficient planning time. So do start thinking about the possible format this might take – all suggestions welcome!

Ann Baepler (Chair of the Meeting)



Heart and Soul

A growing team led by Jane Blackall are offering online Heart & Soul gatherings via Zoom. Find out more on their [Facebook page](#). Heart & Soul is a contemplative spiritual gathering in which you can take time to reflect on life in the company of others. Visit the website - www.heartandsoulcircles.org.uk

Suffolk Pride

We were delighted with the attendance we had and the content from artists, performers, dancers, DJs, and our panel, not to mention the tremendous Suffolk Virtual Pride “Parade from Home”. Here is the link to the Parade from Home just in case you missed it!

<https://www.facebook.com/NewSuffolkPride/videos/4033040463404148/>

Adria, Chair of Suffolk Pride said -

‘I am absolutely delighted with the response to Suffolk Virtual Pride on 27th June. We had a peak of over 1,700 unique viewers within the first few hours of the event and over 800 likes, comments and shares.’ The Suffolk Pride AGM will be on Wednesday 16th September at 4pm.

Taking Pride in Suffolk’s Past

This is a new Suffolk Archives project to capture the hidden stories of LGBTQ+ people in Suffolk’s past and to collect contemporary stories of Suffolk’s LGBTQ+ community. You can find out more at <http://bit.ly/PrideinSuffolksPast> or email sharing.suffolk.stories@suffolk.gov.uk or website www.suffolkarchives.co.uk.

Gentle Angry People

Part one: On Anger – by Ali Mercer – the address from the service on Sunday 21st June 2020

Anger. Such a negative emotion: primitive, uncivilised, it brings feelings of anxiety and fear. It is uncomfortable and frightening, both when we experience another's anger or our own, and it is difficult to examine in a detached, rational way. Our tendency is to keep it controlled, suppressed, under wraps, away from where we think it can do harm.

But anger is too important an emotion to push to the back of our minds. In fact, it has a tendency to rise in us however we try to keep a lid on it, perhaps with good reason.

Righteous Anger. The Oxford Dictionary defines *righteous* as, 'morally right or justifiable'. In some Christian doctrines, righteous anger is considered the only form of anger which is not sinful. Anger, when in reaction to a sense of mistreatment, insult, malice or injustice, is a perfectly understandable reaction. Why then do we fear it? Probably because of where it might lead when it is allowed to go too far: into mindless rage and loss of control, causing us to do physical or emotional damage; when it breeds resentment and the poison of bitterness; when vindictiveness and vengeance cause us to do harm to those things or persons we perceive have hurt us.

Anger *can* serve a positive purpose. In response to injustice, it is a prime motivator in people making changes. However, we see so often how it goes unchecked, spilling over into ugly demonstrations, where hatred infects it. But is it any wonder that this is so? When voices go unheard, as with the 'nightmare screams' of Maya Angelou's poem, so the voices will start singing in righteous anger, a 'fearful trill'. And if that song is not truly heard *and justly acted upon*, the anger will inevitably be lit, by any possible spark, to burn fiercely and hot: rage and vengeance are the unwelcome but wholly understandable followers-on to a righteous anger which is ignored for too long.

And so we see vandalism and arson, hate speech and counter speech. Symbols of a repressive

system come under attack: politicians, authority figures and their property, statues. Sadly, the verbal and physical violence only serve to harden boundaries and further misunderstanding and division. The righteousness becomes swamped and lost in the unholy tumult. The conversations we could be having to find new ways of living in a just society are drowned out by, sometimes petty, arguments over blame, shame, responsibility and who said or owes what to whom.

There are many who believe, or maybe just hope, that we can pull back from the damaging excesses of anger and not just hear and understand, but actually start cutting the ties which bind the feet of all the impoverished, the disenfranchised, the outcast, the lowly and the oppressed.

Part Two: On Equality and Equity

Dark and Light. Cold and Hot. Weak and Strong. Yin and Yang. What the Chinese philosophical text the Tao Te Ching calls the Two which make up the One. For rather than being two sides of a coin, so to speak, the Two are inseparable from each other, two manifestations of a unity. Dark is not the absence of light: it can only exist because of the presence of light. Heat is not the absence of cold: it exists because of the presence of cold. They are really an inseparable whole.

In the same way, human beings cannot be separated one from another. The short and the tall, the big and the small, the dark and the light, the good and the bad: all only exist because of the presence of each other. The divisions we make are shaped only by our language: we label and divide and make the mistake of living by those labels, forgetting that language is but an inadequate attempt to describe the complexity and nuances of the universe we live in. Along with our labels, we tend to make value judgements, favouring one part of the Yin and the Yang: the light, strong, good aspects. We have needlessly become afraid of the darkness, forgetting how it allows us respite and nurtures life. Somehow, we have come to believe that any

Gentle Angry People – cont.

imbalance, any fall to the dark side, will be temporary and that the lightness, strength and goodness will always reassert its dominance. But this is a fallacy: neither Yin nor Yang has any more worth or importance than the other and there is nothing in this world that makes progress synonymous with improvement. We fool ourselves into thinking things will only get better. The lessons of history tell us otherwise.

By assigning differing values to aspects of life, we lose sight of the fact that human beings, as whole beings, are equal to each other in worth. The African Roman playwright, Publius Terentius Afer, wrote a line for a play which is variously translated as, *'I am a human being and nothing human can be alien to me'*. Borrowed by many later writers, it demonstrates that we are all each other, capable of the same emotions, thoughts and actions, however we have chosen to label them. When the Abolitionists of the early 1800's borrowed Shylock the Jew's words from Shakespeare, they were appealing to this sense of shared humanity: *'If you prick us, do we not bleed?'*

To value all lives equally, in all their glory and imperfection, we do not need to destroy or ignore the words and labels we use. We have to balance them, see them and value them as they really are, as equal manifestations of a unity, aspects of a greater whole that we can only ever see glimpses of at any one time, none of them any more important than another.

Life is not fair, we don't all get the same hand dealt to us. Some face challenges others can hardly imagine, some are born into a life of ease others can only dream of. This does not make any person of less value or worthy of less consideration than another. But treating everyone the same is not fairness: it ignores real differences and promotes privilege. We have to look beyond equality to our sense of what is equitable, that is, giving everyone what they need to be successful *despite* their differences. Some people are more in need of assistance than

others which is where equity comes in: being fair and impartial in our dealings with everyone, removing our ideas of who is more deserving than another based on our descriptive labels and value judgements.

Is it enough to recognise our shared humanity, our basic equality, and treat everyone in society equitably? I would argue it is not enough: we have to look at the root causes for some of those systemic things which keep certain people disenfranchised. Then, if we really believe 'change is gonna come', we need to decide on the direction of that change and work to remove those barriers to people's success.

Part Three: The Choice

There is a saying that you can judge a people by how it treats its animals. I think it's even more true that you can judge a people by how they treat each other, especially the most vulnerable in its society. Around the globe, human beings treat each other in a huge variety of ways, with differences between societies and between sub-groups within those societies. What that suggests is that none of those ways is inevitable or unchangeable: they are not simply human beings acting out an inevitable, innate set of behaviours, they are ways which have been chosen and are acquiesced to by those populations.

Much of that acquiescence is through inaction: people are neither actively engaged in pursuing nor opposing a certain policy or opinion. But this sort of neutrality is empty virtue. It is not enough to say *'I am not racist/sexist/ageist/'* or whatever. If we continue to pass by someone in need on the other side of the road, we deny our shared humanity. If we count ourselves as good, goodness demands more from us than sitting on the side-lines while others make the rules. I'd just like to read a short passage from a book called 'The Time is now: A Call to Uncommon Courage'.

'The question, What will you do? Is at the core of spiritual maturity, of spiritual commitment. To follow Jesus means that we, too, must each do

Gentle Angry People – cont.

something to redeem our battered, beaten world from the greed that smothers it. We must put ourselves between the defenceless and the nuclearism that would destroy it in the name of peace. We must confront the sexism that demeans half the human race. We must redeem the anthropology of false human superiority that consumes its resources and diminishes its peoples at the cost of everything on the planet except humankind. And then, as a result, most of humankind as well.'

At this time when we are so aware of the roads that lie before us, we have three possible options and are called to make a choice. We could walk away from the challenging road and choose an easier route, closing our eyes and ears to the difficulties of it all. We could give up the fight because we feel no-one is ever listening and just continue our comfortable, responsibility free lives. The third choice is to refuse to accept the way things are and insist on pushing for change, to join our voices in song with the caged birds and actively work to break the bars, unbind the feet and support people in their flights to a full life.

Whether our emotions are ones of righteous anger, a sense of shame or just a simple desire to make a positive difference, we are prompted to ask, 'What can we do?' We can pick a battle for a cause we care about, whether it's for gender equality, Black Lives Matter, supporting the Homeless, Addicted or Imprisoned, or any of the huge numbers of people whose voices routinely go unheard. Pick one and go to make contact with those who are already fighting the battle. Find out what they need us to do to help dismantle the human-made barriers which keep them back and then do it. As Maya Angelou said, "It may not be expedient, it may not be profitable, but it will satisfy your soul." Why is that? Because doing what is right is in line with the sacred within all of us, the divine spark which lives within and links us all.

It doesn't much matter whether we believe we are doing God's will, creating what Jesus described as the 'Kingdom of Heaven' here on Earth, or if we act because we simply believe in the fundamental worth of all life and in basic human decency. What matters is that we act. It will take courage, but the choice is clear: we must do what it is right to do, where we are in the world. It can be better, it must be better, but it is up to us to take a small step, then another and another and never stop. Let us be gentle in our anger and let us show by our acts, the truth of the words we speak.

Amen –

Ali Mercer

Human beings are members of a whole,
In creation of one essence and soul.
If one member is afflicted with pain,
Other members uneasy will remain.
If you have no sympathy for human pain,
The name of human you cannot retain.

Saadi Shirazi

13th century Iranian poet

Let's Talk About Race - 25th June

2020 – Unitarians gathered online via Zoom to discuss issues about race and the event was recorded, so you can watch and listen to the discussions via this link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qcD0kA-9uU&feature=youtube>

Poetry Group

The next meeting of the Poetry Group will be on Thursday 24th September at 2pm. We will discuss and read the work of D H Lawrence.

Clown Doctors in Suffolk

Me (Dr Kimble Curly) and my trusty Clown Doctor Comrades of @SuffolkArtlink were asked to create some videos to hopefully spread some Joy and laughter medicine to those in the hospitals and hospices who we aren't able to physically visit at the moment.

If you'd like to have a little insight into Kimble Curly's world then do have a watch. If you'd like to meet the other Clown Doctors too then you'll find the whole set of videos here. [Clown Round Videos](#) where you can leave comments too. www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkxhHzHpdkM&feature=youtu.be

We made a Music video and The Song is called 'After the Rain'. I wrote it with some help from Dr Dizzy Day Dream. It kept me busy for a bit ... now I can go on some more walks, board out the loft, tackle the tax return and there's always the washing up. You can turn on the closed captions if you'd like and have a Sing Along at the bottom of the video. If you have a spare flamingo get it out now! Enjoy!

All the best, giggles and flamingos
Kimberley x

Virtual Services in August

Thank you to everyone who led a service for us in July – Martin Gienke, Jodi and John Warren, Alan Ruston, Linda King – and to all the Worship Group who help organise the contributors (mainly Linda).

Here are the August service leaders -
2nd - Paul Hubbard. Lancashire Collaborative Ministry.

9th - Rev Celia Midgley. Retired Unitarian Minister. (Skipton).

16th - Ali Mercer. Ipswich member. (Devon)

23rd - Rev Cliff Reed. Minister Emeritus (Ipswich)

30th - John Stevens. Ipswich member. (London)

For those of you who would like to link into the service Dan Cohen led in his US Meeting House last month –

[MVUC Sunday Service](#). Here is the [Order of Service](#)

Your Meeting House Needs You ...

I know it's still summer so it probably seems a long while till November when our next AGM is due to take place, BUT I need to make you aware of an important issue which will need to be considered well before then:

The five present and long-serving trustees were due to retire three years ago but opted to continue because there was no queue of people wanting to put themselves forward for election and because there were such important issues facing the life of the Meeting House, not least the restoration project.

Now that the restoration is on the way to being finished, Riena, Andrew and I have decided to step down at the next AGM. Linda and Paulette have very generously agreed to stand for re-election, but this means that there will still be **FOUR** trustee vacancies.

If you have been a member of the Meeting for at least one year (a stipulation of our bylaws) *please, please* consider whether you would be willing to stand for election as a trustee. If you'd like to know more about what is involved, please do feel free to have a chat.

ISCRE Volunteers

In connection with the Black Lives Matter Movement, you may remember my saying that I had approached ISCRE (Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality) to see if there were any practical ways we might offer our support and it seems that there is a need for suitable mentors for young people of colour. Three of our members have already expressed an interest in volunteering for this role but there may be others who would also be drawn to do so. Please do get in touch with Vivian Mushati, the Schools & Wellbeing Practitioner at ISCRE if this strikes a chord with you. Her email address is vivian@iscre.org.uk and please mention your connection with the Meeting House.

Ann Baepler

Photos of the restoration work on our Meeting House



Birthdays in August

Happy birthday to Madeleine Spence on 11th; to Phil Chatfield on 15th; to Saskia Sakals on 20th; to Jenny Spence on 21st; to John Stevens on 23rd; to Sidonie Sakals on 31st.

May you all have a good celebration and lots of cake!

Unitarian Women's Group Choir

If you don't already know, a Unitarian Zoom Choir has been formed - Uni-Sing! If you have not already joined and wish to do so, click on the link below with your name and email address. After which you will get the Zoom link to join the group, as it is a closed Facebook group.

<https://facebook.us12.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=38537e059ea0909a30b62d3a7&id=7c73ac3fdc>

The singing sessions at present are on a Saturday afternoon at 3.00pm. We sing Unitarian hymns from the purple and green books etc and have breakout groups in order to talk about hymns and music and meet old and new friends.

Disclaimer –

We welcome contributions from all members and friends of our congregation. Views expressed in the articles are those of the individual and not necessarily those of our congregation or of our Unitarian community

Contacts Contributions PLEASE for the next newsletter to Tessa before the deadline of Wednesday 26th August by email to ipswichunitarian@gmail.com or post to 48 Crabbe Street, Ipswich IP4 5HS

To contact our Secretary, Riena Jackson, ring 01473 210064/email mjack76748@aol.com
Website – www.unitarianipswich.com

Thought for the month

Your imagination is your preview of life's coming attractions."

Albert Einstein